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OTE 81-3742

24 SEP 1981

Training

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Operations

FROM: Harry E. Fitzwater
Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT: The Language School, the Language
Incentive Program and the DO

REFERENCE: Memo for DDO from STO/DO, dated
25 August 1981, Subject: The LIP and
the DO - An Overview with Recommendations

1. This memorandum responds to the issues raised by the STO/DO in his paper to you of 25 August 1981 on the Agency's language program.

2. Language School (LS) studies confirm the importance of length of training to attainment of proficiency levels in language study. Hopefully, the new training development complement will allow DO officers to complete their language courses.

3. The STO/DO brings up several areas of concern in regard to the Agency's language testing program. First of all, he contends that the testing currently being done does not provide an accurate measure of how well a DO officer can use his language skills operationally. This is essentially true. Our testers cannot rate people based on how well they are doing their job. They must base their assessment on performance in the testing room. Additionally, it should be kept in mind that the Language School testing staff tests people from all parts of the Agency plus prospective employees. In order to do this, we use a standardized testing system. It would be impossible to accommodate the oral interview to the job requirement of each candidate. Therefore, our measuring tool is proficiency, i.e., how well the candidate can perform in most common situations.

4. The STO/DO questions the relationship of factor scores to global ratings. These factors, introduced in January 1981, were intended to provide the users with a more detailed description of what a test candidate can do with his language skills. Factor scores do not add up to the

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overall or global score. In fact, the global score is assigned first and the testers' impression of a candidate's ability in each of the factor areas is marked afterwards.

5. To the STO/DO the most striking aspect of the factor system is its compensatory/noncompensatory facet. Compensatory ratings apply before level 3, in that below this level strength in one or more areas will compensate for weakness in another. At level 3 and up a factor falling below the average of the other factors impedes communication. For example, an applicant for a Language School instructor position, whose other factors were 3, had pronunciation in English so strongly Japanese that Americans unused to dealing with Japanese speakers of English could not understand over half of what the applicant had said. This is not to imply that there are no inconsistencies with the application of the factor system. There are, and after having gathered data for a year, the Language School plans to investigate patterns that have emerged as a way of removing these inconsistencies.

6. As pointed out in paragraph 9 of reference memorandum, there were problems with the results of the Soviet Realities Course. First, the results were not properly processed. All Language School test results go through a certification cycle which begins with the raters' assigning a global rating and continues through spotting inconsistencies in ratings, calling in third raters, dealing with other discrepancies and, finally, certifying the test. The majority of the problems with the Soviet Realities test results could have been identified had the results been processed through this cycle. Unfortunately, the semiautonomy of the Soviet Realities Course and the fact that no Agency students were in this running led to a nonstandard handling of both the pre- and post-course scores. The Language School has discussed the problem with the course director, and scores will be processed according to established procedures in the future.

7. A related question, however, is whether exposure to, and noncorrective practice of, a language leads to improvement. Although the Soviet Realities Course was given in Russian and students were encouraged to use the language, we have been told by the course leaders that minimal correction was given to encourage language use and not dispirit participants. Some of the participants also had an hour a day of language training. However, a total of five to six hours per week of corrective practice falls short of the normal amount required to move a 2+ student across the 3 border unless he was close to the border to begin with. Recent research indicates that it takes progressively longer periods of

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study to cross borders as one ascends the Government scale. The number of hours of corrective practice in the Soviet Realities Course is below the average number needed to make this transition.

8. The Language School agrees that many Language School reading proficiency tests are outdated. We are also aware that some tests are compromised. Language School reading tests are under constant development on a time-available basis. It is a costly process, and it takes 14 months of part-time work from 10 people to develop a brand new test. A new Russian test is being developed; and, as an interim solution, the old one is being revised by having outdated reading passages replaced. The Spanish test is brand new and was devised following the latest principles in educational testing and measurement. We have recently engaged a new contract employee to assist in the formation of a Japanese test.

9. The Language School (LS) is aware of the discrepancy between LS and Foreign Service Institute (FSI) scores. However, the discrepancies differ from language to language and seem not to be equal in number or direction. For example, in the language in which we have the most data, Mandarin Chinese, LS ratings are on a par with FSI ratings. This, of course, does not eliminate the problem. However, it suggests that for the preservation of a common standard, common training and monitoring between Agencies should be undertaken. The LS has approached FSI about this possibility a number of times but to no avail. Since FSI has not done formal training of their testers for more than 10 years, one can only assume that language testing at FSI only loosely corresponds to the overall Government standard.

10. At the present time, FSI has prioritized curriculum revision above test development and has furnished only general statements on the design of a future end-of-training test. Recently, FSI stated that test development will lag behind curriculum development by at least a year. To the extent practicable, the LS proposes to follow the more specific aspects of FSI test development plans, i.e., strengthening job-related situations. The LS will defer other possible modifications until FSI publishes its TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS for the FSI end-of-training test.

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11. The STO/DO assumes that use of a language abroad automatically leads to improvement of language skills. This is not always the case since improvement depends very much on how and with whom the language was used. This question deserves further study. To this end, the Language School has devised a Language Use Questionnaire for Returnees. Data from this form will be used to provide us with current information about language use abroad and the needs of Agency employees overseas. Analysis of the data will allow us to address this question in a systematic way and also will enable us to make improvements in language training.

12. A point in the STO/DO memo which should be corrected is in paragraph 15. The Dutch tester in this case was a Eurasian from Indonesia who is completely bilingual in Indonesian and Dutch from birth. A second rating was obtained from a native Dutch speaker, and the two testers agreed on the rating of the candidate. Should she desire to be retested, however, we would be happy to arrange it.

13. The STO/DO has raised a number of major issues relative to Agency language training. To these we would add one more--the way in which unit language requirements have been designated. Presumably, DO managers assigned these desired levels after reading the definitions of oral proficiency levels. However, LS experience shows that a first reading of the definitions can mean different things to different people. It is thus a source of worry to the LS that the requirements for these positions may have been arrived at from radically different perspectives. We propose an innovative solution below.

14. The STO/DO's report clearly outlines common problem areas and poses challenges for making the Agency system more responsive to Agency needs. The LS suggests that the following steps be taken to deal with these concerns:

a. A study of completed questionnaires from recent returnees from abroad to determine the extent of their language use and their language needs abroad.

b. The strengthening of LS job-related situations in the LS oral interview and a monitoring of FSI's development of an end-of-training version of the interview with a thorough study of its TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS.

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c. A study of factor patterns as they relate to internal LS rating inconsistencies.

d. The preparation of a set of tapes for DO officers with 4 level language ability and suitable operational experience to rate blindly by indicating which tape was suitable for a given type of job, e.g., "everyday work on the streets," with a subsequent report to the DO on how this affects the setting of proficiency levels for language-designated positions.



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cc: STO/DO

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OTE/LS/[redacted](17 Sep 81)

Distribution:

- Orig - Addressee
- 1 - STO/DO
- ✓ 2 - DDA
- 2 - DTE
- 2 - OTE Registry
- 2 - LS

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Draft Notice - Language Incentive Program

FROM:

Executive Secretary

EXTENSION

NO.

81-2425 1961/1

DATE

14 October 1981

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

1. Language Dev. Comm.:

2. Chairman
7D18 HQ3. DDO Representative
2C20 HQ4. NFAC Representative
2F24 HQ5. O/DCI Representative
1006 Ames Building6. DDA Representative
7D18 HQ7. DDS&T/STO (FYI)
6E45 HQ8. NFAC/STO
2F42 HQ9. DDS&T Representative
412 Key Building

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11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

1. Attached is the draft of a Language Incentive Program notice intended to replace [] dated 6 September 1979. The draft incorporates Language Development Committee decisions made during the past two years and is consonant with recent Executive Committee policy statements concerning the Program.

2. Your comments, proposed changes, additions, or deletions are solicited.

3. A Language Development Committee meeting is scheduled for 0900 Wednesday, 28 October in the DDA Conference Room to discuss the draft notice.

[]

DDA REGISTRY
FILE: []

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CIA LANGUAGE INCENTIVE PROGRAM

1. General

a. The CIA Language Incentive Program is intended to reward job-related utilization of foreign languages primarily in a foreign environment and encourage achievement and maintenance of proficiency in selected foreign languages in both foreign and domestic assignments.

b. Each directorate will (1) identify language units and determine the languages, language skill(s), and proficiency levels required within each unit and (2) identify incentive languages for the Achievement and Maintenance Programs. Any language may be designated an incentive language when a Deputy Director finds it necessary to encourage study in that language to meet his directorate's current or projected language needs. Each directorate, in coordination with the Language Development Committee (LDC), will draw up its own lists of incentive languages for Achievement and Maintenance Awards.

2. Eligibility

a. All full-time staff employees, staff agents, career associates, and other contract employees are eligible for

Language Use Awards which take the form of an addition to compensation for job-related utilization of a foreign language and for Language Achievement and Maintenance Awards in the form of lump sum payments. Language specialists, i.e., those employees hired primarily for their competence in a foreign language(s) when occupying language specialist positions in which they use the language(s) or a mutually intelligible language for which they were hired, are ineligible for LUAs.

b. Part-time employees, who work at least 20 hours per week, are eligible for full Achievement and Maintenance Awards and, at the option of the directorate, may be eligible for Language Use Awards on a prorated basis.

c. New employees can become eligible for Language Use Awards and Maintenance Awards upon the successful completion of one year of their three-year trial period. Achievement Awards do not require the one-year trial period.

d. To be eligible for a Language Use Award, an employee must fulfill a foreign or domestic Unit Language Requirement (ULR). The employee is eligible only during the tenure in the ULR designated position.

e. To be eligible for participation in the Achievement and Maintenance Awards Program, an employee must:

(1) Be designated as a participant in the program by the employee's directorate.

(2) Have a tested or certified proficiency level in the specified incentive language which is documented in Agency records at the time of designation as a participant.

3. Policy

a. Language Use Awards

(1) Language Use Awards (LUA) are based upon Unit Language Requirements (ULR) which must specify the use of foreign language(s) in the position as a primary and essential ingredient which is consistently required in performing the job, and conforms to the following criterion:

Creating a Unit Language Requirement depends on whether or not the specified language is truly essential in the sense that a ULR incumbent must have the language capability as an integral part of his or her general qualifications and without which an incumbent cannot perform at ~~the specified level~~ or requires either interpretation or translation assistance to do so. ✓

(2) Each directorate has the authority to designate foreign field ULRs and those domestic based ULRs which equate to foreign field ULRs.

(3) In order to maintain a common inter-directorate standard for Headquarters-based ULRs those positions so designated by each directorate must be approved by the Director of Personnel with the advice of the Language Development Committee.

(4) The compensation in the form of a LUA to be paid an employee who fills a ULR is fixed at \$50 per bi-weekly pay period and is the maximum a participant in the program may receive.

(5) A full (\$50) LUA will be granted where qualification is accomplished by full compliance with ULR and minimum proficiency requirements or by falling within the primary language or primary skill exceptions. The circumstances in which a full LUA will be awarded are:

- (a) The incumbent meets the ULR requirements and possesses at least Minimum Professional Proficiency (Level 3) in the required language(s) and skill(s).
- (b) Primary language exception: In instances where the ULR requires that the incumbent possess proficiency in two or more languages, at least one of the languages ~~may~~ be designated Primary (P): the other(s) Secondary (S). The incumbent must meet the requirement for the Primary language(s) at the required level or at the "3" level (whichever is higher) and meet the Secondary language(s) requirement at the level stated in the ULR.
- (c) Primary skill exception: For Group III languages (Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Arabic) with difficult

writing systems where speaking and understanding are of primary importance, the incumbent must meet the requirement for the Primary (p) skills at the required level or at level 3 (whichever is higher) and meet the Secondary (s) skill requirement at the level stated in the ULR.

(6) A partial Language Use Award of \$25 will be paid to full-time employees occupying a Unit Language Requirement (ULR) if the employee has a valid proficiency test on record which is not more than one full level below level "3" or no more than one full level below the ULR if the ULR is for levels higher than level "3". Partial awards will also be paid to employees occupying dual language requirement positions for qualifying in one of the two required languages. Partial Use Award payments are effective 1 December 1980.

(7) If an employee has been paid a partial LUA (\$25) based on a ROPE score of less than the required level, the employee will be paid an additional \$25 per pay period for the time frame established by the ROPE if the employee is tested at the required proficiency level for a \$50 award upon return to Headquarters.

(8) In overseas language units where the ULR requires comprehensive skills (reading, speaking, and understanding), Language Use Award eligibility will be established by the speaking proficiency test alone, if a reading test cannot be administered.

(9) The proficiency level will be confirmed by testing administered or authorized by the Office of Training and Education (OTE) or through officially authorized verification procedures. If circumstances do not permit official verification of proficiency during the duration of an employee's designation to the program, the normal three year limit of test validity may be extended to five years.

(10) If an employee does not possess Minimum Professional Proficiency when initially assigned to a ULR position but acquires it during the employee's tenure on the job, the employee may receive retroactive payment by establishing a tested Minimum Professional Proficiency upon return to Headquarters. The employee will only be eligible for retroactive payment for a Language Use Award for the period following the first year in the assignment. The presumption is made that the Minimum Professional Proficiency was acquired during the first year; therefore, retroactive payment will only be made for the subsequent time period.

b. Language Achievement Awards

(1) Language Achievement Awards are intended to reward acquisition and/or increased proficiency in language

competence and will be granted to designated employees for achievement or upgrading of language proficiency in an incentive language.

(2) Language Achievement Awards will be granted in accordance with the following schedule.

Achievement Awards Payment Schedule

Comprehensive (Reading, Speaking, and Understanding) Program
Language

<u>Groupings</u>	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>	<u>Level 4</u>
Group I			900	1100
Group II		900	1100	1300
Group III	800	1100	1300	1500

(a) One-half of the award for the Comprehensive (reading, speaking, and understanding) Program will be determined by the level achieved in reading, and one-half of the award for the Comprehensive Program will be determined by the level achieved in speaking, regardless of the level achieved in understanding.

(b) Awards for the Specialized (reading, speaking, or understanding) Program will be one-half of the Comprehensive (RSU) Program awards. No award will be made for understanding when any other award has been made in the same or mutually intelligible language.

(c) Language Achievement Awards are cumulative, e.g., a participant with no language proficiency designated to achieve a 3 level of a Group II language could earn \$2,000.

(3) No awards will be granted for language skills achieved prior to the designation of a language as an incentive language or prior to the designation of an employee as a participant in the program. Under exceptional circumstances, retroactive designations of employees as participants in the program may be granted by the directorate concerned. Designation of incentive award languages will not, however, be made on a retroactive basis under any circumstances.

(4) Employees who attain a 5 level proficiency through a proven record of learned (not native) ability may be nominated by their directorate for a special Achievement Award. Chairman, Language Development Committee must approve the award on the basis of supporting evidence submitted with the nomination. The cash award will amount to the level 4 payment plus \$200. Awards may be paid retroactively, but not prior to 22 January 1981.

c. Language Maintenance Awards

(1) Language Maintenance Awards are intended to reward the retention of language skills by employees where there is immediate or potential benefit to the Agency in meeting language needs.

(2) Directorates will designate Language Maintenance Awards for maintenance of proficiency in an incentive language at Full Professional Proficiency (Level 4) or below provided the employee has been a recipient of an award for less than eight consecutive years.

(3) Maintenance Awards will be granted for maintaining the level established upon nomination to the program. The level to be maintained will be determined by the sponsoring office, within the limits established in the award payment schedule and be based upon projected assignments.

(4) Maintenance Awards will be paid one year from the date of nomination to the program if the employee possesses a valid proficiency level at the time of nomination. If the employee does not possess a valid proficiency level, the award will be granted one year from the date of the test which establishes the proficiency level.

(5) An employee is not eligible for a Maintenance Award and a Language Use Award for the same language during the same time period.

(6) Payments for maintenance will be made in accordance with the following schedule.

Maintenance AwardsLanguage

<u>Groupings</u>	<u>Level 1</u>	<u>Level 2</u>	<u>Level 3</u>	<u>Level 4</u>
Group I			450	550
Group II		450	550	650
Group III	400	550	650	750

a. The Maintenance Award will be determined by the proficiency level maintained in either speaking or reading or understanding. A demonstrated proficiency in more than one skill will not increase the award.

b. No partial payments will be made; all maintenance requirements must be met to qualify for a maintenance award, e.g., an employee who is required by the directorate to maintain proficiency at the 3 level for reading, speaking and understanding must demonstrate the required proficiency in all skills to receive the award.

c. An employee may receive only one Maintenance Award for maintaining proficiency in mutually intelligible languages.

d. The number of Maintenance Awards paid to one employee per year will be determined by the sponsoring component based upon future use of the language capabilities possessed by the employee.

4. Procedures

a. Language Use Awards

(1) Operating Officials will establish language units and determine Unit Language Requirements (Form 3401, Language Requirement Change Authorization) and will authorize LUA payments to employees (Form 4120, Language Use Award Authorization).

b. Language Achievement Awards

(1) Operating officials will nominate an employee to participate in the program (Form 3268, Language Achievement and Maintenance Recommendation) and will authorize payment of award (Form 3289 Language Achievement and Maintenance Award Authorization).

(2) The Office of Training and Education will verify employee's achievement level (Forms 3268 and 3289).

(3) An award is made after a designated participant in the program has been tested and certified by OTE for achievement of an awardable level of proficiency in an incentive language for the first time, or for progress from a previously established and recorded proficiency base to a higher proficiency level in the designated language. A participant must be tested to provide a basis for awards if there is a recorded claim or tested proficiency which has not been validated since 1 January 1970. An award may be earned only once in the same language for each

awardable level of proficiency achieved.

(4) An employee designated as a participant in the language achievement program in one language who already possesses a skill in a mutually intelligible language, such as Hindi/Urdu or Thai/Lao, can receive an award in the new language only after attaining a higher proficiency level than the tested level in the mutually intelligible language. Lists of the mutually intelligible languages are available from training officers.

(5) Upon receiving an award or awards at the originally designated level or levels, an employee must be redesignated by the directorate as a participant in the program to be considered for further awards.

(6) An employee who has been designated as a participant in the program and who enters formal language training will be tested for proficiency to determine eligibility for an award only at the completion of the training. Other designees to the program may be tested when their supervisors believe an awardable level has been reached. Proficiency tests for achievement awards will not be repeated within a six-month period unless language training has occurred within that period. A participant who has reached two or more levels without receiving an award may qualify for two or more achievement awards at the same time.

c. Language Maintenance Awards

(1) Operating officials will nominate an employee to participate in the program (Form 3268, Language Achievement and Maintenance Recommendation) and will authorize payment of award (Form 3289, Language Achievement and Maintenance Award Authorization).

(2) The Office of Training ^{OTE} will verify an employee's maintenance level (Forms 3268 and 3289).

d. Proficiency Testing and Verification Procedures

(1) Direct oral interviews by OTE Language School instructors and Language School developed reading tests are the preferred methods to assess oral and reading proficiencies. If the employee to be tested cannot be tested by an oral interview, the following procedures may be applied:

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(b) Telephone tests may be administered when security considerations permit.

(c) Tape tests may be administered in the field and verified by the Language School.

(2) Proficiency tests for Achievement and Maintenance Awards will not be repeated within a six-month period unless formal language training has occurred within that period.

(3) Proficiency tests and/or other means of verification of language competence will normally be considered valid for three years. At the option of the Directorate the period of test validity may be extended to five years for Language Use Awards (See 3 . Policy, a. 9) or reduced to two years for Maintenance Awards.

(4) Employees who are recipients of Language Use Awards and who possess native (5 level proficiency) in the required skill(s) do not need to be retested to remain eligible for the award, provided a test has been administered after 1 January 1977.

5. Responsibilities

a. Directorate operating officials will:

(1) Establish language units, determine Unit Language Requirements and authorize individual employees for Language Use Awards.

(2) Nominate individual employees as participants in the Achievement and Maintenance Programs and authorize payment of Awards.

(3) Identify incentive languages for the Achievement and Maintenance Programs.

(4) Submit guidelines and administrative procedures to the Language Development Committee for review.

b. The Director of Training and Education will:

(1) Test and/or verify the proficiency level of personnel designated to the program.

(2) Provide administrative support for the program and maintain records of participants and awards granted.

(3) Provide statistical reports on the program for the Language Development Committee.

(4) Initiate Language Achievement and Maintenance Award Authorization (Form 3268) for completion by sponsoring component.

(5) Establish proficiency criteria for the program.

c. Language Development Committee will:

(1) Prepare an annual report to include an assessment of the Language Incentive Program.

(2) Advise the directorates on Language Incentive Program policy and procedures.

(3) Review directorate guidelines and administrative procedures to ensure uniformity within the Agency.

(4) Annually review the lists of inactive languages.

(5) When required approve special Achievement Awards.

d. D/Rena ?